

#### **30-3-10.4. Modification or termination of order.**

(1) On the petition of one or both of the parents, or the joint legal or physical custodians if they are not the parents, the court may, after a hearing, modify or terminate an order that established joint legal or physical custody if:

(a) the verified petition or accompanying affidavit initially alleges that admissible evidence will show that the circumstances of the child or one or both parents or joint legal or physical custodians have materially and substantially changed since the entry of the order to be modified;

(b) a modification of the terms and conditions of the order would be an improvement for and in the best interest of the child; and

(c) (i) both parents have complied in good faith with the dispute resolution procedure in accordance with Subsection 30-3-10.3(7); or

(ii) if no dispute resolution procedure is contained in the order that established joint legal or physical custody, the court orders the parents to participate in a dispute resolution procedure in accordance with Subsection 30-3-10.2(5) unless the parents certify that, in good faith, they have utilized a dispute resolution procedure to resolve their dispute.

(2) (a) In determining whether the best interest of a child will be served by either modifying or terminating the joint legal or physical custody order, the court shall, in addition to other factors the court considers relevant, consider the factors outlined in Section 30-3-10 and Subsection 30-3-10.2(2).

(b) A court order modifying or terminating an existing joint legal or physical custody order shall contain written findings that:

(i) a material and substantial change of circumstance has occurred; and

(ii) a modification of the terms and conditions of the order would be an improvement for and in the best interest of the child.

(c) The court shall give substantial weight to the existing joint legal or physical custody order when the child is thriving, happy, and well-adjusted.

(3) The court shall, in every case regarding a petition for termination of a joint legal or physical custody order, consider reasonable alternatives to preserve the existing order in accordance with Subsection 30-3-10(1)(b). The court may modify the terms and conditions of the existing order in accordance with Subsection 30-3-10(5) and may order the parents to file a parenting plan in accordance with this chapter.

(4) A parent requesting a modification from sole custody to joint legal custody or joint physical custody or both, or any other type of shared parenting arrangement, shall file and serve a proposed parenting plan with the petition to modify in accordance with Section 30-3-10.8.

(5) If the court finds that an action under this section is filed or answered frivolously and in a manner designed to harass the other party, the court shall assess attorney fees as costs against the offending party.

Amended by Chapter 271, 2012 General Session